About AsureQuality Limited

The AsureQuality Academy is the learning and training service of AsureQuality, a state-owned enterprise that provides food assurance services. The Academy provides in-house and commercial workplace training to major contributors to the Ministry of Primary Industries. Training includes short courses and work-based learning, including four NZQA-approved training schemes.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Level 1, 7A Pacific Rise, Mount Wellington, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 2117 total enrolments in 2021 including 410 Māori enrolments (19 per cent) and 68 Pasifika (3 per cent)
	International: 72 enrolments were on work visas in 2021
	No data is yet held showing the total number of students enrolled identifying as disabled
Number of staff:	Eight full-time equivalents, four contractors, 48 secondary trainers, 32 secondary assessors, two secondary moderators (training delivery is the secondary role of staff)
TEO profile:	AsureQuality Ltd
	Since 2021, the Academy has been integrating into the learning function of the People and Culture group. During this time, a quality assurance lead role was appointed and both the Academy and organisation have experienced new leadership.
Last EER outcome:	At the PTE's last external evaluation and review (EER) in 2018, NZQA was Highly Confident in the PTE's educational performance and Confident in its capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	Two courses with the highest enrolments were selected as focus areas for the EER:

- Advanced HACCP (Training Scheme) (Level 4) (number 125343-1)

- Advanced Auditing (a two-day short course)

MoE number:	7210
NZQA reference:	C48329
Dates of online EER visit:	2, 3 and 4 November 2022

Summary of results

Excellent outcomes and matching of needs are supported by quality processes, highly effective trainers and generally quality self-review. Some processes and initiatives are still being developed, alongside a need to achieve full coherency of data and information.

Highly Confident in educational performance

The needs of students, employers and industry stakeholders are being comprehensively met. The courses and training meet essential industry requirements and are of high relevance.

The trainers have extensive knowledge and experience. They are highly regarded, including for their commitment and facilitation of inclusive and engaging learning environments, which contribute to the excellent educational outcomes achieved.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Valued outcomes are also enabled by some excellent processes that are well embedded and are meaningfully and collectively used to advance quality practice and delivery. In the main, authentic processes support effective management of key compliance accountabilities. Timely reporting of student credits is an area requiring improvement.

Generally, self-assessment information and processes are of good quality. The use of data is excellent in some regards. However, in other respects the Academy still needs to establish systems to achieve coherency of information and data and more sophisticated, collective in-depth analysis, such as the case with achievement data. This reflects the recent integration of the Academy into a new arm of the parent organisation, and new management and quality assurance personnel.

Whereas some systems and key initiatives still need to be implemented, overall the PTE has achieved excellent outcomes and quality training, despite a time of significant change and industry turbulence. This gives high confidence in the Academy's performance going forward.

Key evaluation question findings[1]

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Marginal**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Students acquire relevant knowledge and skills and are supported to achieve well through the extensive experience and knowledge imparted by valued trainers.
	Annual course completions were 92-93 per cent in 2020 and 2021, despite the extreme challenges Covid-19 brought to the sector. The Academy identifies achievement of statistics-based parity for Māori and Pasifika, though this requires further analysis. Whereas Māori achieved as well as non-Māori in credit-bearing courses, in 2021 Māori completions in non-credit bearing courses were lower at 84 per cent. Completion rates for Pasifika overall fluctuate – numbers are small.
	Completions for students on work visas are on par with overall completions. Achievement data for disabled students and/or students with specific learning support is yet to be collated.
	Non-completions are understood to be due to students leaving their employment. Vocational inexperience for the relevant training programme is also identified (despite clear course entry information). In response, the Academy has been communicating with employers to reinforce entry requirements.
	The opportunity to make better use of data and to enhance the depth and collective analysis of data has been identified. The provision of different completion data sets – from scoping to the EER visit – showed the challenges the Academy has experienced, and the process it has been on, with the integration and new personnel and the need to rebuild analytical systems. The provision of different data sets has led to inconsistent understanding of performance, highlighting the priority need to ensure a coherent, consistent reporting process.

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[1] The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

Conclusion:	Students acquire relevant knowledge and skills. Most students complete the courses. Self-assessment systems are being strengthened to ensure coherent, consistent and collective data analysis and reporting.

1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	The courses provide significant value and meet students' and stakeholders' core needs. Courses and training serve to meet mandated industry requirements, and/or enable the meeting of licensing or registration requirements, maintenance of skills and knowledge and upskilling. Trainers see, and are committed to, their roles as contributing to future-proofing their industry.
	Students described gaining greater confidence in their employment roles due to the knowledge and understanding acquired, improved understanding of industry requirements and expectations, and the affirmation the learning is providing of their decision-making. The learning is being immediately applied in the workplace – this is assisted by the way in which the learning is related to individuals' employment contexts. Refresher courses re-instil understanding of the principles and reasons underlying regulations and legislative requirements.
	Employers value the training which enables access to new export markets and the training and qualification of meat inspectors. This is a key element in enabling meat processing companies to meet international market access requirements. Regular, structured engagement is undertaken by senior staff with some key stakeholder clients, but this does not necessarily include targeted questions to specifically understand the impact of the training and how well it is meeting employer needs. An employer survey is undertaken for the Level 4 New Zealand Certificate in Meat Processing (though one employer said they prefer to give any feedback through their direct relational engagement with the Academy, rather than through a survey).
	For the short course delivery, end-of-course surveys are used to ensure student satisfaction with the training. The surveys do not

	specifically ask about the value-add or difference that the training has made. A graduate survey is being developed.
Conclusion:	The courses comprehensively meet multiple needs and contribute valued outcomes. Self-assessment is sufficient in the context of the specific delivery, with opportunities to further develop processes to enhance understanding.

1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Training programmes are kept relevant and current through the knowledge and expertise of staff and trainers, who work within industry and alongside industry stakeholders and employers.
	Good relationships and ongoing engagement with industry organisations and key stakeholders inform the delivery and improvement of programmes, as well as the development of new courses and training resources. Courses are regularly reviewed.
	Industry stakeholders interviewed for the EER said the courses are essential to their workplace needs and indicated satisfaction with the training delivery. They identified AsureQuality as a preferred training provider due to its professionalism and the quality of the training. The tailoring of delivery to the students' workplaces was valued.
	Learning activities and resources are effective in engaging the students. All courses have learning objectives which are discussed with the trainees at the outset of training and then at the end to understand if these have been met.
	Moderation is a valued practice actively engaged in by the trainers. The validity and appropriateness of assessment is supported by effective moderation processes. External post-assessment moderation results are mostly positive. An exception was 2022 Workforce Development Council moderation, with none of the three assessment samples meeting requirements – the Academy's own internal moderation found the same result prior to external submission, and which resulted in internal review and action. The process for annually

	scheduling internal moderation seems to be a work in progress as the Academy seeks to align this with planned Workforce Development Council moderation activity (and to the breadth of unit standards being delivered).
	Students are surveyed about their experience of the course.[2] The Academy has developed an excellent self-assessment tool for reporting the results of student course survey feedback on a six-monthly basis, with analysis by course and trainer. Mostly this shows students' expectations are being met across delivery. Anything less is easily identified, with the form of reporting across a breadth of relevant question areas effectively isolating where and why needs may not have been fully met.
	Consolidated student survey feedback results are periodically provided to the trainers, and are reviewed at senior leadership team meetings, where action plans are determined if necessary.
	While the Academy collects survey feedback, explicit review by ethnicity would support understanding to match Māori and Pasifika students' needs, and also the representation of Māori and Pasifika student voice. This might also be improved by a specific survey question and/or specific cohort engagement mechanism. The organisation has self-identified the need to develop engagement with iwi and Māori groups.
Conclusion:	Relevant course provision and quality delivery matches students', employers' and industry needs well. Self-assessment insightfully informs quality and the understanding of matched needs.

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[2] The overall response rate for surveys to date in 2022 is around 30 per cent.

1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	The knowledge, expertise and facilitation skills of the trainers were praised and highlighted by students interviewed for the EER, and support the effective engagement of the students in their learning. These facilitators were highlighted in the 2022 student survey feedback for the two focus area courses. Trainers and students described an inclusive learning environment where trainers ensure each learner is greeted and engaged and that extra time and support is provided to those who may be struggling. All trainers are required to hold Train the Trainer and Assessor modules which include components on learner wellbeing and inclusive learning environments. They are also experienced and are supported by ongoing professional development to identify and respond to student support needs. Students have found the virtual learning environment to be engaging. They commented on the proactive engagement with each individual student in that context to check understanding at different points in the course. Examples shared showed how trainers adapt their teaching to respond to different learning preferences, styles and needs. Students said they feel comfortable to ask questions and for help because of the open and supportive environment facilitated. A large collaborative piece of work was undertaken to integrate the 2021 Code of Practice[3] into the AsureQuality Safety and Wellbeing Framework. Following a 2022 gaps analysis to the new Code, the Academy developed its risk register to specifically incorporate learner safety and wellbeing Code outcomes, ensuring their continuous and explicit focus, monitoring and review. The Academy has established a defined procedure to support trainees at risk or with special needs, and asks learners (and employers) to self-identify such needs prior to the courses

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[3] The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021.

	commencing. Trainers use this information and shared examples of course preparatory work undertaken to ensure appropriate engagement and support.
	The Academy communicates clear study information about student suitability for each course, and has been actively communicating with employers, having experienced students attending courses without the expected background knowledge.
	In the longer courses (e.g. Level 4 Meat Processing), the Academy has implemented a trainee issue tracker process which involves ongoing review and engagement with students on their progress, and responsiveness to any learning needs.
Conclusion:	Students are effectively engaged and supported in their learning through the expertise, skill and knowledge of experienced trainers who are well supported in their roles by relevant professional development.

1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	The last two years have involved much change for the Academy. This is not only due to the significant impact of Covid-19 on the meat industry and organisation, but also with changes to organisation leadership and strategy, the Academy's integration into the AsureQuality People and Culture group, and new management and quality assurance personnel.
	The integration has helped clarify the Academy's mandate and purpose, and from all accounts the integration has brought key benefits and been a positive development. Staff have been well informed by the ongoing communication from the management team and wider group.
	The quality of training delivery has been sustained by effective systems and processes, and committed, experienced, quality trainers. The Academy has self-identified some key areas for development to enhance training delivery and responsiveness. (This is related to cultural responsiveness and contemporary learning design and delivery.) But these developments are at the planning stage rather than implementation. They aim to align

	with related organisational developments underway and as a part of careful development and design.
	The use of data is excellent in some regards – for example, analysis undertaken of moderation and student survey feedback. But in other respects, such as achievement data, systems are still in development to achieve coherency of data and more sophisticated, collective, in-depth analysis.
	Well-established processes support effective academic leadership and shared practice including trainer forums focused on relevant aspects of teaching and learning experience and practice. The forums are well regarded by the trainers for the collegiality and continuous learning facilitated. Trainers have ready access to knowledgeable and experienced peers and access to sufficient resources to support learning and teaching.
	The development of staff is effective. All trainers and assessors complete a development programme that includes adult education unit standards and practical skills training through observations and co-delivery with an experienced trainer. Regular trainer observations are authentic and thorough. A suite of courses is accessible through the learning management system and include relevant areas of focus such as Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Te Reo Māori, cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness.
Conclusion:	Some very effective and well-established systems and processes support educational achievement, with others in development, reflecting that the Academy and organisation have undergone a period of change and development.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	In the main, important compliance accountabilities are well managed, supported by comprehensive policy documents (such as the international student policy) and effective systems and procedures. Education-related examples of such processes include:

	- maintenance of a unit standard library to ensure the currency of unit standards and awareness of upcoming changes - a programme library containing course and programme approval documentation - process maps guiding requirements, procedures and monitoring - maintenance of a risk register - well-established moderation processes and effective practice to ensure quality and improvement. The timeliness of student credit reporting is one area where the Academy is not fully meeting regulatory requirements and requires improved oversight to understand why there have been notable instances of late reporting for some time. Since the EER visit, the Academy reports that it has undertaken a full review and implemented several processes to mitigate this issue. Otherwise, NZQA regulatory and reporting requirements are well met, including submission of programme change notifications, regular submission of temporary site information, and timely submission of attestations.
Conclusion:	In the main, the Academy has effective systems and procedures in place to manage key compliance accountabilities, with the timely management of student credit reporting an area to improve.

Focus areas

This section reports significant findings in each focus area, not already covered in Part 1.

2.1 Focus area: Advanced HACCP (Training Scheme) (Level 4) (number: 125343-1)

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Good**

2.2 Focus area: Advanced Auditing (a two-day short course)

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Good**

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

NZQA recommends that AsureQuality Limited:

- Ensure the coherency of reporting and analysis of achievement data.

- Review the focus of existing engagement with employers to include systematic enquiry about how well the training is meeting needs.

- Overtly analyse student feedback data by ethnicity and to ensure the student voice is sufficiently representative.

AsureQuality Limited has confirmed that it has implemented actions to respond to these recommendations and plans an evaluative review mid-2023.

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. This include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.

NZQA requires AsureQuality Limited to review and address reasons for some ongoing instances of late reporting of students' credit achievement, to comply with Rule 13(1)(b) of NZQA's Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2021 requiring credits for students to be reported within three months of assessment.

AsureQuality Limited reports that a full review has now been undertaken with subsequent corrective actions implemented to mitigate this issue and risk of non-compliance. It plans an evaluative review mid-2023.

Appendix

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud[4]*

- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*

- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

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[4] NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister authorised as responsible for Part 20 of the Education Act.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*

- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs including ITOs but excluding universities, and*

- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2011 and the Training Scheme Rules 2012 respectively. These rules were also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Rules 2018 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2018 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, training schemes and consents to assess and registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz). All rules cited above are available at https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/.

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Final report